

Claims

1. A method for producing Solar Grade Silicon by thermal decomposition of a silicon precursor in the presence of an excess of hydrogen by separately introducing
5 hydrogen gas and the silicon precursor in a vertically oriented reaction chamber in which the lower portion holds a pool of molten silicon, the surface of which the reactants are directed toward and react during the formation of essentially
10 elementary silicon and hydrogen chloride, off gases and by-products formed are withdrawn from the upper portion of the column; silicon formed is withdrawn from the lower portion of the reactor,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n that the fluid silicon
15 precursor is introduced at ambient temperatures through a pipe arranged coaxially in a feed pipe for hydrogen gas, where the hydrogen gas functions as a cooling medium for the introduced silicon precursor, in that a steep temperature gradient is held within
20 the reactor, and that the reactants are conducted at great speed toward the surface of the molten silicon by rapid expansion of the silicon precursor and hydrogen gas, and brought to react in the lower warm portion of the reactor, in that any formed silicon
25 chloride reacts with the excess hydrogen in the upper portion of the reactor and falls as particulate solid silicon.
2. The method according to Claim 1
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n that the silicon
30 precursor is trichlorosilane, silane, tetrachlorosilane, or other halogenated silanes, preferably trichlorosilane.
3. The method according to Claim 1 or 2,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n that the lower portion
35 of the reactor is held at a temperature above the

melting point of silicon, 1410 °C, and the cold upper portion is held at a temperature under 400 °C.

4. The method according to Claim 1, 2 or 3,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n that the level of
5 molten silicon in the reactor is held constant by a
constant level system for continuous removal.
5. A reactor for the practice of the method according to
the preceding Claims comprising an elongated
10 container (1) with an inert lining, where the
container is equipped with an injection system (2)
for a silicon precursor, preferably trichlorosilane,
and hydrogen, and an outlet (5) for unconverted
hydrogen HCl and any by-products,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d b y a constant level
15 outlet system (6) for produced, liquid silicon, that
the feed system (2) comprises an outer pipe (4) for
introducing hydrogen gas and a pipe (3) arranged
coaxially with pipe(4) for the introduction of fluid
silicon precursor, and where the height of the
20 reactor is sufficient to establish the necessary
steep temperature gradient.
6. Reactor according to Claim 5,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n that the temperature
in the lower portion of the reactor is held at a
25 temperature above the melting point of silicon, 1410
°C, and the cold upper portion is held at a
temperature under 400 °C.
7. Use of the method according to Claims 1-4 and the
reactor according to Claims 5-6 for the production of
30 Solar Grade Silicon in an integrated, essentially
closed process by reacting low grade silicon with
hydrogen chloride gas during the formation of
trichlorosilane which is introduced into a reactor
according to Claim 5, after which unconverted

hydrogen and hydrogen chloride are separated and hydrogen chloride gas is used for the conversion of additional low grade silicon and the hydrogen gas is introduced as a reactant in the process.